

ABRAHAM

FAITH UNDER SEIGE



FAITH is
a many
splendored
thing!

**Lester
Sumrall**

Thinking of You

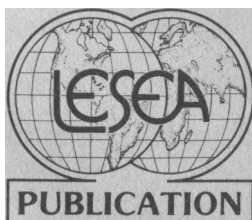
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The gift of God
is eternal life.
(John 3:16)

Abraham: Faith Under Siege

FAITH is a many splendored thing!



Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

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1

What is Faith?

In Hebrews 10:38 it says, "**Now the just shall live by faith...**" That is speaking about the justified, the ones who are just as if they had never sinned, the born- again ones.

The Bible says that the believer, the justified, does not live by natural means; he has a secret power called "faith." The just live by faith. They make decisions by faith. They do things that others do not quite understand because they live in a dimension beyond natural dimensions; they live by faith.

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that we cannot please God without faith. You and I should seek faith in order to please God. Faith is not to benefit ourselves altogether, but to please God. What then is faith? It is a knowledge of God. The amount of your faith is in direct relationship to your experience and knowledge of God.

If I took a little three-year-old child and stood her on top of a high counter and said, "Honey, jump to me," she would look down at me and say, "No." Then if her mother came and stood there and said, "Baby, jump to Mama," the child would say, "One and two," close her eyes, and into the air she would go with her arms out. I could protest, "Well, why didn't you jump to me? I'm stronger than your mama?" But the child would respond, "I don't know you." Many of us have not jumped when God said, "Jump," because we did not know God. Rather than asking God for faith, we should seek to have a knowledge of God. This is not seeking for faith, it is faith. The knowledge of faith can change your life completely.

There has been too much mysticism about faith. It does work. However, God cannot bless ignorance. If you want to get hold of the power of God, seek to learn about God since by knowing God, you will have faith.

Faith under siege! I want to tell you about a man who actually started a new dispensation. There have only been seven, and a man who started a new dispensation by himself was Abraham. It was the Dispensation of Promise. He conceived and gave birth to a new race of people, called Christians. God used him and he

brought into being the body of Christ. We are a new breed of people that has nothing to do with the bloodstream.

One of the main things I want to point out to you is this—that faith is a life and not an incident in your life. We may want it to be an incident, we may want it to be a high point, but that is not what faith is. There were dynamic movements of faith in the life of this man Abraham. He was not born great—he grew great.

Faith is not easy. Many people really want black magic. They want the power to say, "You die, and you live, and you die, and you live." That is not what faith is all about! You say, "But some of these men that have faith get a lot of people healed." Well, two things—first, it could be a gift—one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit functioning through them. But on the other hand, if a man has been in a closet with God for many hours and he just says, "Lord, do something," God is so close to him that it is easy for God to say, "Certainly I'll do that." If you are going to walk in carnality and walk with the world, then you say, "Hey, God, do something," God will say, "What did you say?" You're so far from Him He cannot understand you. Intimacy with God is the divine relationship with faith; it

is not an easy life—but it is an exciting life. It is not something that just happens to you.

2

Faith Hears

Genesis 12:1 says, "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee."

Abraham was a citizen of Ur of the Chaldees, possibly in the area of where the Garden of Eden once stood. Abraham's people built the city of Babylon and Babel, the great tower. Despite their culture, the people and his family were idol worshipers.

In Joshua 24:2 it says, "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods." Abraham's environment and heredity were contrary to his faith. He was not a product of his day; he was

different. Abraham was like a lily that came up out of the mire, and like a rose that came forth from among the briars.

Abraham received word from God that he should leave his home and his country and all of his people, and that he should go out from them. God promised to bless him if he did. God speaks to many people, but too often they don't recognize God's voice. It is sad when they do not know the voice of God.

What is faith? It is hearing the voice of God. God spoke and Abraham heard. How can you hear the voice of God? Being quiet before Him, living in His presence, reading His Word, loving Him with all your heart. God wants to speak to His people.

The first fascinating thing about Abraham is that when God spoke, he heard it. He did not have to run off like poor little Samuel did when he said to Eli, "Did you call me?" Eli said, "No, I didn't call you." After three trips in there Eli said, "Samuel, that must be God talking to you."

When God has something to say, have a listening ear! Whole denominations miss God because they cannot hear what He has to say. Many preachers of large congregations cannot hear when God wants to move them into a deeper way of life, and they have missed what

God is doing in their generation. Nobody is claiming that it is easy to hear God. Jesus said that there were those who had ears, but did not hear. I can assure you that there are millions of so-called Christians who do not know the voice of God at all. They have believed upon Him, but they have never heard Him speak where they can identify that God spoke to them.

Faith is the knowledge within us that when God speaks, we understand what He has said. So faith HEARS God!

3

Faith Acts

Genesis 12:4 says, "Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran."

Abraham obeyed. He did not stop between the two great rivers, Tigris and Euphrates—a rich, luxurious, tempting area. At that point in time the greatest civilization on the face of the earth was located right there. God said, "You go west young man." and He did not give give him a map. He just said, "Go" and Abraham started going. If you think that was easy, you have missed the whole story. I have seen parts of the excavated city of Babylon in the British Museum. It had paved streets and sewage running underneath the streets, and I have seen gold work they have brought up from deep down in the earth. It is beautiful filigree gold

work. It was a great city, and rich Abraham had to sell his property and leave town, his kinfolk, his friends, and everything he held dear.

What is faith? When you hear the voice of God, you act. You say, "Yes, Lord, I'll do that." I have met literally dozens of people that said, "God told me to do something, but I didn't do it." I shudder when a person says a thing like that.

Since I was 17 years of age, I do not remember being out of the will of God, for the simple reason that when God told me to do something, I never discussed it with anybody. I just did it.

God told me to go out and preach and I left home with 65 cents. Some of you would have waited for \$50, and you would still be there waiting. When He said, "Go around the world," I sailed out of San Francisco with twelve \$1.00 bills—all the money I had in the world. It is ACTION that God likes. It is movement that God wants. That is faith!

4

Faith Challenges the Unknown

If you know all the facts, you do not need faith. Hebrews 11:8, **"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."** If you are going to become a person of faith, you are going to enter into the area of the unknown. You will be moving in places you do not understand.

Faith is when you are willing to deal with God in areas you are not sure of , not knowing if you have a place to put your feet. When we began construction of the church building that we now worship in, we had just come back from the Philippines. I had no money. Do you know what God said? He said, "If you have the

courage to sign the papers, I'll supply the needs." You know what I said? "That is very interesting. When they don't get their money, I'll say, 'He told me,' but they won't be able to find you. They have my address and they'll come and get me." He said, "They will never come." THEY NEVER HAVE COME. Until you sign your name, you do not know what you are getting into. That is the area of the unknown. We are still moving in the area of the unknown.

There are preachers who will not build a new building. It is an area of the unknown and they do not have the money in hand. There is hardly a church in our country that will start building without money because it is an area of the unknown. That is what faith is about.

The Bible says that he went out not knowing whither he went. You should have seen his neighbors. He got on those big beautiful camels and had all of his cattle with him, and his sheep, goats, and they started moving along. The neighbors said, "Where are you going, Abraham?"

He said, "I don't know."

"You have all this caravan, and you don't know? Could you tell us approximately?"

Not only did Abraham not know where he

was going, but he did not have any friends that had been there before. He only knew that God said "Go!" and he started moving in God's direction to obey and to walk with God.

The most fun in life is going where you do not know how far it is or when you are going to get there, but it is exciting to arrive!

Faith is an element of the unknown. If you are not willing to function in the unknown, or if you have to have security, then you will never know what faith is!

5

Faith Has No Generation Gaps

Faith is a power that can tie generations together. Faith is the authority to say to your son — "I've got it, you get it; you give it to your children." Faith is the power to transcend generations. Denominations die because they do not have the faith to move into another generation with the same stamina and spirituality that they had in the old generation.

Hebrews 11:9 says, **"By faith Abraham sojourned...in a strange country."** You are supposed to live on the face of this earth as a stranger to the earth. This world is a place you are passing through.

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country. He lived separated from others, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac (one generation), with Jacob (another

generation), the heirs with him of the same promise. Abraham shared his faith with new generations.

Doubt and fear and compromise can never do it. It takes faith to do it. You have to believe God that your children will believe the same as you believe. You say, "When does it begin?" It begins in your own heart before the child is conceived. All during the time that the child is in the womb, and when it is delivered, you pray over that child and as he grows up, be sure that is the major thing he is taught.

We have a lot of disagreement about the Bible being taught in schools. Many of the people that are quarreling about it do not even have a Bible in their homes. The major place for the Bible is in the home. The second major place for it is in church. A lot of churches do not have much Bible teaching either. When you send your children to school, they should be walking Bibles – speaking out the word of God that they have already heard.

Faith is the power to germinate the Christian religion from one generation to another. I have all three of my sons around me here like I did when they were children. If one of them would begin to do wrong, I would quickly go to his house. I am still Father. They

have to do the same toward their children. I want to do the same toward my children and toward my grandchildren as long as I live. You say, "Why?" I want them to serve the same God I serve; He does not put up with any "monkey business," and we are not going to put up with any "monkey business." My boys can tell you that there was no time during their life when I did not know where they were.

When it came time to go to college, I did not bring in a lot of great big catalogs and say, "Now which one do you want to go to?" I had already decided that years before. I put them in my car and took them to an independent Bible school that would teach them about the gifts of the Holy Ghost and flowing in the Spirit, so they could learn more of the truths of God. You send your children to an ungodly school that teaches them atheism and every evil thing, including that they came from monkeys, and what are you going to expect of your children? You are to blame for it.

What is faith? Transcending generations!

6

Faith Defeats the Enemy

Did you know that the first general mentioned in the Bible is Abraham? Abraham led the first war mentioned in the Bible? He was an aggressor. He went after the enemy! They did not attack him—he went after them. Do you think faith is for sissies? No, real faith is strong.

Faith is a general at war. Five kings took over Sodom and Gomorrah, but in Genesis 14:14 we read, "**When Abram heard that his brother** (which was his nephew Lot) **was taken captive, he armed his trained servants,...**" Abram had his own private army; he was a dangerous man. It says he had three hundred and eighteen men born in his own house, and he armed them with swords and spears. Verse 14 says, "**He pursued them unto Dan.**" But Abraham was in Beersheba, so a couple

hundred of the worst miles on the face of the earth separated the two.

When he got to Dan, **"He divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night..."** (Genesis 14:15). Talk about strategy? Faith is strategy. He divided all three hundred and eighteen servants and pursued thousands of soldiers at night. He smote them and pursued them into Hobah, which is on the left side of Damascus.

By daybreak it was all over. He had won the battle and rescued Lot and all of his family. He found the kings that had been taken prisoners and they had a jubilee march back toward home. They marched across the mountains and passed through Jerusalem. They could have gone down the river Jordan, which would have been the quickest way back to their town, but instead Abraham led them across the top of the mountain shouting and praising God – and that is when they met the king of Salem, Melchizedek.

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered

thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all" (Genesis 14:18-20).

Abraham paid tithes of everything he had and he was a very wealthy man. Perhaps he gave as much as a million dollars into Melchizedek's treasury that day.

I have never met a great man of faith who was not a liberal giver. It is the liberal soul that is made fat, the Bible says in Proverbs 11:25. The more you give to God, the more God is obligated to give to you. Abraham was setting himself up for a real blessing!

Most people do not want to think of faith in that way. They think that faith is saying to God, "Give me, give me, oh God, oh God." You will never get anything. Faith is being liberal. Faith is a warfare. Abraham said, "The people have done wrong and I'll correct it." Faith is being a general for God.

7

Faith Refuses to Be Bought

In Genesis 14:23, Abraham said to the king of Sodom, **"I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich."**

Faith refuses the unholy. All the wealth belonged to Abraham; he won it at war; it was his, but he gave it all back to them. Read the life of Abraham and you will find that he was one of the richest men on the earth. If somebody said, "Show me where people in the New Testament were rich," you only need one verse, Galatians 3:29. **"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."** We are the seed of Abraham by faith. He made it everywhere, and you can do the same thing. Do you believe it?

While I was in my office some years ago, a man walked in the door. He was a sharp looking fellow about 40 years old. He sat down in a chair and pulled from his briefcase stock in a big insurance company. He said, "In our headquarters we have decided to do something for you. We will make you rich." Now when strangers want to make you rich, you had better look under the cover and see what is under there, or you are not very smart. So he shuffled his insurance papers around and said, "We are also going to give you a policy, so if you die your family gets a lot of money. No charge to you."

When he slowed down to where I could say something, I said, "What are you expecting of me?"

"Very little. Sign this letter." He had it already written with my name on it, as if I had written it. The letter stated that I was to give him my total mailing list, that I had stock in this company, and that I recommended they immediately dial this number and there would be a man at their door to sell them stock and also to sell them policies. He said, "Sir, all you have to do is sign your name. Give me your mailing list and I'll do the rest."

I looked at him for a moment and said, "I'm

already rich in Christ. I do have some friends, but I wouldn't sell any of them to you for a million dollars. And furthermore, if I signed that I'd be a liar. I didn't even write the letter; you wrote the letter." I said, "I'm getting my blood pressure up, and if I were you, I'd leave before I go any further with this matter." He said, "You're the only preacher that ever refused to take it. " I said, "Yes, I know, but I do not want it so you can leave now."

That is where you have to be like Abraham. Someone says, "Why does God bless you?" Well, He has to; He has no option, you see. The devil would like to trap every preacher in America if he could, and he has three hooks he catches them with. The first is self-adulation—showing how glorious he is. The second is material gain—to get all you can. The third is to play with the women. All three will take you to hell.

Faith is refusing booty and bounty belonging to the devil. Just say, "No, I'm not interested!"

8

Faith Is Giving Others First Choice

Faith is our daily life in our business. When it will not work in our business, it will not work in church either.

Genesis 13:5, **"And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents."** Because of Abraham's prosperity Lot acquired flocks and herds and tents. Some people never know why they get blessed. They just happen to be living with blessed people.

"And the land was not able to bear them, (that's blessing) that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, (that's prosperity) so that they could not dwell together" (verse 6). He did not think to sell a few cows. When material things separate you from your precious ones, you have too many cows. On that basis, they should have sold some of the

herd, but they would not do it. So there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram and the herdsmen of Lot, and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled also in the land, so evidently they got into the quarrel.

"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee," (the greater one always humbles himself first) **"between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we be brethren"** (verse 8).

"Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes (he did not pray) and beheld all the plain of Jordan, (right where the devil was ruling, where sodomy was one of the greatest powers), **that it was well watered every where..."** It says it was **"even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest into Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan..."** (verses 9-11). He did not even leave a watering hole for his uncle. Lot promptly journeyed east, and Abram said, **"I'll take what's left."**

From that moment, Lot got less and Abram got more. Lot even lost all of his cows. The next time we see him he was sitting in the gate of

Sodom and did not have even one cow! For fellowship he would not sell a cow, but in order to live in Sodom, he sold them all. All the Lots are not dead yet, I want you to know that. Are we willing to give somebody else first choice?

I asked one young preacher, "Why are you divorcing your wife?"

He said, "It's a thousand things."

I said, "Just give me one." He couldn't do it. He couldn't get it down to one; he said it was a thousand. I wanted to tell him it was the devil in him. He went ahead and got his divorce.

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Giving others first choice can sometimes be very painful. I have lost three or four television stations to give somebody else first choice!

Faith is giving to others. Unbelief is selfish.
Unbelief is always choosing the best for self.

9

Faith Staggers Not

Romans 4:20 says, **"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."** Faith was believing for an heir, a world saviour.

Abraham's faith continued under seige after he arrived at the place where God wanted him. A lot of people cannot accept that. They say, "I am what God wants me to be, and I do what God wants me to do. Why then is this happening to me?" That is the end of their faith.

Abraham journeyed to the promised land and his faith was still under siege.

Why? Because God promised him a supernatural son. In Genesis 17:6 it says, **"And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee."**

But the devil was fighting them. Do you know that the devil tries to keep you away from all the promises of God? He is the chief destroyer of faith in people's hearts. If you don't know that, you don't know the devil. You have to keep fighting him. The fight will not be over until you go to heaven, so just gird up and fight him!

There was nine years difference between Abraham and his wife, Sarah. When she was 66 and he was 75, God said, **"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing"** (Genesis 12:12). By the time Sarah was 70 and he was 79, still nothing had happened.

They kept claiming it, but when Sarah reached 80 and he was 89, they still had no child. The devil was tormenting them all the time trying to destroy their faith.

When Sarah was 90 and he was 99, God spoke up! Genesis 21:1-3, **"And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him, And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac."** The word Isaac means

"laughter," and God had promised him that son 25 years before. Twenty-five years later God did it. That was faith? Not staggering!

Abraham and Sarah finally had their promised child. That's what faith is. If God says "Jump through a wall," close your eyes and jump! It is not your business to make the hole: it is God's problem to make the hole; it is your problem to jump. Faith is staggering not; when God says it, it is true.

10

Faith Rears a Son to Believe

Abraham stayed close to Isaac. We have no record of him permitting the boy to visit Lot and his family in the glamorous city of Sodom — not one time. He did not feel that his son had to climb the social ladder in Sodom. If he had gone down there he would probably have married one of Lot's daughters.

Rearing a son with the right people — that is faith. Isaac stood by the altars of Abraham and watched God move in his father's life and said, "That's the religion I want, just like daddy's."

Most of us never identify faith when it comes to rearing a family. I am sure it is a great part of training any family. It will not work in the pulpit if it does not work at your house. Lots of people only want pulpit faith, but God

is looking at your bedroom; He knows all about what is going on behind closed doors.

Abraham did not send Isaac to the learned, liberated university of Sodom. He did not study chemistry in the classes of Gomorrah where he would have learned the intrigue and social prestige of making love to a man rather than a woman. God said of Abraham in Genesis 18:19, **"I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD to do justice and judgment that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."** Don't you want God to bring upon you the things He has spoken of? If Abraham had not lived right, God could not have done it for him.

You cannot listen to the neighbors or kinfolks on the way to raise your children, or they will all go to hell. God gave them to you and you are responsible that those children live right. You teach them to obey from the very beginning and let God work it out accordingly as He has spoken.

11

Faith Is Total Love

Faith is a total dedication. Look at Genesis 22:1-2,

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, (isn't that amazing God said he had only one son?) whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Faith is total commitment and faith is total love. This was the hardest day of Abraham's life. It was easier to fight all the kings of Babylon than to do this. Why did God ask Abraham to do such a thing? Perhaps it was because of Isaac. He was now 10 or 12 years old and

Abraham was 100 when he was born, so he had spent the last 10 or 12 years kissing that boy. He had been so busy hugging and loving him, he had not said much to God for 10 years!

God looked down and said to him, "Abraham, you used to talk to me a lot. Now you are doing all your talking to Isaac. Abraham, you say you love me with all your heart. Take your son three days journey to Mt. Moriah and offer him up as an offering on an altar for me."

This was a severe test of Abraham's faith. How could he make that decision? God had told him that his son would bless all nations—and God could not lie. So whatever God said later, that had to stand. His son had to live; he didn't know how, but he did know he had to bless all nations.

At Mt. Moriah, Abraham put the stones together, placed his wood on the stones, put his pot of fire right there, and got some kindling ready. He looked at his boy and said, "Son, do you love your daddy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Son, God told me to offer you up as a sacrifice. I do not understand it, but I want to tell you something, Isaac. I will never leave here

without you. If you burn to death in that fire, I will never leave here without you. I will die at this spot. I will not move two feet without you with me. Do you believe me?"

"Yes, Daddy. Put me on there; I'm ready right now." And the father, 112 years old, still strong and powerful, laid him on the altar.

Abraham raised his right arm with that sword he had made in his own blacksmith shop, and as he started to bring it down, God said, "Hold it, hold it! Quick, hold it now! Do not get any closer! I know that you love me. I know that I am first in your life. Abraham, look back there"—and right beside him was God's sacrifice!

He reached and got that ram, and with Isaac beside him, they offered a burnt offering unto Jehovah. (Genesis 22).

Is that all? No. God said, "Abraham, look north from where you are." There were no buildings and there were no walls at that moment as God said, "See that strange looking hill over there about three stones throw away?"

"Yes, I see that, Lord."

"See those funny places that look like eyes?"

"Yes, they do look like eyes, that's right."

God said, "See the front part in the face?"

"Yes, it looks like a skull. Look on top, Lord, It looks like two trees crossing each other. I see people on them. I never saw anything like that." They knew nothing about crucifixion in his day.

God said, "How many?"

Abraham said, "I see three."

"Look real close at the one in the middle, Abraham. That's my son, and he will be the sacrifice to save the whole world!"

Jesus said, **"...Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.!"** (John 8:56). Abraham saw why he had to take his son to Mt. Moriah. Jesus could not die anywhere except Jerusalem because Abraham had been there with his son when he looked 1500 to 1800 years into the future and saw the Son of God die for the whole world, in a means of death not known at that time. They had not used crosses for execution in his day. Jesus did not come for anything else except Calvary—to die for the sins of the world. When you get to a place of total consecration, you receive from God as you would never receive any other time in your life.

I was traveling up in Tibet. We were way out of Unan, the capital city, high up in the mountains, traveling from village to village and

town to town, preaching. We had with us an English missionary named Coley, who had just been married. I had been the best man at his wedding in Unan, and he was going back to his station on the borders of Tibet. Coley was a brilliant man, and I think he later left missionary work to become an officer in the government of Great Britain. As we were traveling in the mountains, he looked, over at me and said, "Did you ever meet Henry Ford?"

I said, "No, I never had any reason to meet Henry Ford."

"Henry Ford has done more to damn the world than any man that ever lived," said Mr. Coley. Now an American could say that and it would not bother me at all, but I did not like an Englishman saying it. What is the difference? I do not know, but I did not like an Englishman to say it. I said, "That is a lie."

He was emphatic. "Henry Ford has turned the whole world into automatons. All a man knows to do anymore is to screw one screw. If he ever lost that screw he would starve to death. He cannot do a thing but screw that screw. He has obliterated personality off the face of the earth."

I came back at him and said, "That is a lie. Henry Ford loved the poor man. The janitor in

his factory drives a new car, and in your country a good policeman or a good fireman, or a good carpenter or a good brick layer — not one of them can afford a car."

So a little Yankee and a little Englishman battled words at the top of Tibet. He got so angry he got on his mule and rode away. I was so angry I got on my mule and followed him. We entered the mud village where we were to spend the night, and I had to preach to the people on the street that night. I felt so bad, I said, "Dear God, I do not even know Henry Ford. He may have done all of that and worse, I do not know. What was wrong with me?" I felt like the meanest man in the world.

Those horse inns had to be protected. They had walls all around them with big gates so you could sleep in peace at night. I went outside the walls, way around the back where they had a paddy patch, where rice was growing. I knelt down in a paddy bed and said, "God, I'm not worthy to be a missionary. I'm not worthy to even be a Christian. I am such a mean person. I got upset at one of your servants that very likely was right, and I do not know this man he is talking about. He may have done all these things, and Lord, forgive me, if you can. Forgive me, please do."

As I wept and laid down in a Tibetan rice field, suddenly the glory of God hit me, and I began for the first time in my life to prophesy. It flowed out of my belly like a river. I began to prophesy with a loud voice. "Thus saith the Lord." Nobody heard it except the rice in the field, and it poured out of me; words of beauty and loveliness and grace flowed. I had been wanting the gift for so long, and I got it at the bottom of the ladder, when I had come to the end of Lester Sumrall and the beginning of God. I got up out of that rice field and went running around that wall, into the gate, and Coley was upstairs looking down into the courtyard.

The horse inns were very large; they may have had a hundred horses in them at night that had been traveling on the road. That is where they had to stay overnight and be fed, and the only transportation they had up there were horses. There were no roads at all.

I called to him and said, "Brother Coley, we've been going for three week's and you haven't had a haircut. I am good at cutting hair. Would you please permit me to trim your hair for you?" Some people have hair that grows fast; his was looking pretty bad even for a Tibetan. So he said, "I would be so thankful for

it, sir."

Down he came. Before he could get to the bottom, I had ripped off my shirt and had taken out my scissors and my comb which I kept with me, because I was a barber. I wrapped my shirt around his neck to protect his clothes from hair. Holding the scissors and the comb, I said, "Sir, would you just forgive me before I cut your hair? I was so wrong. I am sorry. Would you please just say you will forgive me?"

He turned and said, "No, I was wrong. Would you forgive me? I think maybe Mr. Ford is a good man."

I said, "Oh, dear God, Let's not change sides. Let's just forgive and leave Ford out of our lives."

I trimmed his hair and he was thankful. Coley was a stately person, standing about 6 foot 2 inches, thin, and with a very fine-chiseled face. He thanked me for the haircut and walked back upstairs. I felt so good that I could serve him—serve the one I had offended. In doing that, I got a gift that continues until today. I still prophesy. At the end of yourself is where God stands. From the bottom is where God picks you up.

12

Faith Is Intercession

Abraham was concerned about Lot and his family. Genesis 18:23-33 tells the story. When he knew that God intended to destroy Sodom and Gomorrha because of the wickedness of the people, Abraham drew near to the Lord, and said, **"Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"** What a thing for a man to say to God! **"Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?"**

What intercession! Look what he told God. **"That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked..."**

You ought to get that; that will teach you what the great tribulation is all about. God has not changed His nature yet. **"that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee:**

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
What a challenge in the face of God!

"And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five?" He was not only a good fighter, but a good lawyer.

"And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it." He looked real close at God and saw sympathy and love in His face, **"And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake."** Abraham did some fast counting. He thought Lot would have a church of fifty down there, but then he might only have forty-five in his church. **"And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall be thirty found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there."** Abraham thought that Lot would have that many in his family and his servants, at least, as the minimum. I'm sure there were tears flowing out of the man's eyes. **"And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord:**

Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake."

"And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake." God smiled at him. God loved this, you know? What a man!

Then Abraham had one more thought about his nephew and his wife—they were two, he had married off at least two of his daughters to Sodomites. He had daughters and sons-in-law. So if there were only two daughters, two sons-in-law, that is four. He had two single daughters, that is eight. No doubt they had eight or ten or twelve children, so he felt safe now.

"And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place." Here was a man that knew intercession—weeping intercession—God-changing intercession.

God sent two angels down to destroy Sodom but the Sodomites wanted to destroy them by committing fornication with them until they died in the streets abused by hundreds of men. Abraham was out on the cliff the next

morning and it looked like a furnace over Sodom. His intercession didn't work! There were not even ten living for God in that family.

Abraham, what is faith? Faith is the strength and the power to fight and destroy the enemy.

13

Faith Finds a Godly Bride for a Son

There is something wrong with any man that does not help pick out his own family.

If you let your dog run the neighborhood, you are going to really have some strange looking dogs at your house. When you do not even know the companions of your children, you will wonder what happened to them and question why they do not want to come to church anymore.

When Isaac was at the age when he should get married, Abraham called his most trusted servant, one that ruled over all that he had, and said, **"...Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my**

son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." (Genesis 24:2-4)

There will always be unbelievers to overcome when you live a life of faith. **"And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou earnest?"** (verse 5).

Abraham's servant was concerned that he would not find a bride for Isaac. "If I cannot find one, are you ready to send the boy over there to see if he can find one?"

"Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again" (verse 6). Abraham was totally against the thought of Isaac leaving the promised land. "You are going to bring that girl here—we are not going to go after her."

"The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake to me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence" (verse 7).

Abraham had already been communicating with angels, so the servant went. God moved so quickly he did not know how to handle it. By the time he arrived, the girls were standing out there waiting for him. You say "Where?" At the right place, where there was water. Every man thirsts for water, and she was the one waiting.

That is faith. Abraham got exactly what God told him he would get.

Rebekah's parents and brothers had some doubt about it and they asked her, "Will you go with this man?"

She said, "Yes, I'll go." So she married Isaac and continued the good lineage of Abraham. If all the good people had produced good people, we would have the world saved. But as long as good people produce bad people, we can never save the world.

14

Faith Executes His Last Will

Abraham made full preparation for the generation that followed him. **"Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son..."** (Genesis 25:5-6).

Abraham took what God had given him and distributed it before he died. He executed his last will and testament himself. He was the administrator because he knew his heirs would fight and kill to get their share, so he paid them off.

I received a letter recently regarding a beautiful person who used to be a member of our church. She had bought a bond on our church a number of years ago for a thousand

dollars. She got old and went out to California where she died. The children are now writing back, demanding their money and all the interest on it for that little bond. Why didn't that little lady, who never needed anything, send the bond to the church and say, "I want to give this to the church"?

What matters is not just how much you have, but how well you take care of your business. It would be better if you distribute what you have before you die, and there will not be any quarrel after you are gone. All that I am ever going to give my sons is given now; they are not going to get a thing when I die.

Do you know that you are going to be judged by the deeds done in the body and not in the spirit? If you do not finalize your will and your property before you leave this earth you will be judged. Jesus told you all about it. He said there was a man to whom He gave one talent, but he dug a hole and buried the talent. Another one put it in the bank and collected interest. The third one really multiplied his. Whatever God has given you, you are to use it. You are to finalize your business before you go. When you stand before the Most High, you will give an account for everything that God has placed in your possession. Faith is knowing

what to do with what God delivers into your hand.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

What is faith? Faith is walking with God and doing His will in every area of your life.

MY CHALLENGE TO YOU

If you are not a Christian, I invite you to receive the hope and peace in your heart that only Jesus gives.

To become a Christian, you must deal with Christ Jesus directly. In a quiet moment, bow your head and talk to Him. In your own words say something like this:

"Dear Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. I believe that you died and rose from the dead to save me from my sins. I want to be with you in heaven forever. God, forgive me of all my sins that I have committed against you. I here and now open my heart to you and ask you to come into my heart and life and be my personal Saviour. Amen."

If you say that to Christ and mean it, He will come in instantly. At once you will sense you have been transferred from the devil's dominion to the kingdom of God.

Read I John 1:9 and Colossians 1:13. A wonderful peace and joy will fill your soul.

If you pray a prayer like this, let me hear from you. I will send you a little pamphlet entitled, "So You're Born Again!"

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ABRAHAM

FAITH UNDER SEIGE

FAITH is
a many
splendored
thing!

What is faith?

The amount of your faith is in direct relationship to your experience and knowledge of God. The Bible says that the believer, the justified, lives in a dimension beyond natural dimensions; he has a secret power called "faith."

Abraham lived by faith. He left his comfortable home in Ur of the Chaldees, not knowing where he was going, to walk with God. Abraham knew God intimately and trusted the Lord to guide him in every area of his life.

Living by faith is not an easy life—but it is a life filled with excitement and blessing.

Faith is knowing God!

Since the age of 17, Lester Sumrall has lived a life of faith, ministering for over 50 years in more than 100 nations of the world. He is a pioneer in Christian broadcasting, a prolific writer, teacher, missionary, evangelist, and pastor. He founded LeSEA, a multi-faceted evangelistic outreach whose goal is to win a million immortal souls to Jesus.



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